

HEALTH

Binge Eating Disorder The Most Common Eating Disorder

Binge eating disorder is a newly recognized condition that affects millions of Americans. People with binge eating disorder frequently eat large amounts of food while feeling a loss of control over their eating. This disorder is different from binge-purge syndrome (bulimia nervosa) because people with binge eating disorder usually do not purge afterward by vomiting or using laxatives.

How does someone know if he or she has binge eating disorder?

Eating large amounts of food does not mean that a person has binge eating disorder. Most people with serious binge eating problems have the following warning signs.

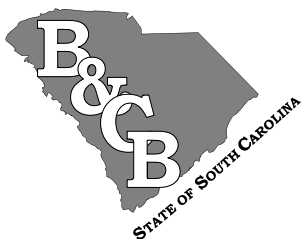
- Frequent episodes of eating what others would consider an abnormally large amount of food.
- Frequent feelings of being unable to control what or how much is being eaten.
- Several of these behaviors or feelings:
 1. Eating much more rapidly than usual.
 2. Eating until uncomfortably full.
 3. Feeling of disgust, depression or guilt after overeating.
 4. Eating large amounts of food, even when not physically hungry.
 5. Eating alone out of embarrassment at the quantity of food being eaten.

How common is binge eating disorder?

Although it has only recently been recognized as a distinct condition, binge eating disorder is probably the most common eating disorder. Binge eating disorder probably affects 2 percent of all adults or about 1 to 2 million Americans. Among mildly obese people in self-help or commercial weight loss programs, 10 to 15 percent have binge eating disorder. The disorder is even more common in those with severe obesity. Binge eating disorder is slightly more common in women, with three women affected for every two men.

What are the complications of binge eating disorder?

The major complications of binge eating disorder are the diseases that accompany obesity. These include diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, gallbladder disease, heart disease and certain types of cancer. Consult your family physician for diagnosis or a referral to a physician that specializes in binge eating disorder.



STATE HEALTH PLAN PREVENTION PARTNERS
South Carolina State Budget and Control Board
Office of Insurance Services-Insurance Benefits Management
November 2000

